

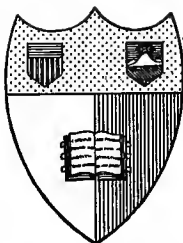
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SILVER PICTURES.

BY

JULIA RUSSELL McMASTERS.

PHILADELPHIA :

H. COWPERTHWAIT & CO.

1856.

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P R E F A C E .

THIS brief book is made Sacred to *the* most SWEET MEMORY, from which it has chiefly drawn its breath of life.

For while other memories have come forth to me pure-Parianed from the past and taken shape in song, each with its separate smile and attitude of bliss and blessing, *this* Sculpture stands the truest type of the love that illumines them all. And so long as that love shines stedfast on that fixed, fair Form, so long will that form give out its memnon-music from my soul.

SILVER PICTURES.

WHITE LILY.

Imperial Flower ! from out thy silver chalice,
Blending their sweetness with thy soft perfume,
Come thronging memories of a columned palace
Decked for a festal train one night in June.

Pale, pure and perfect, thou didst mock the ceiling
With thy rich breath and white regality ;
Thy curling lip and dazzling depth revealing
Serene disdain that aught should rival thee.

Yet bright in rivalry beamed lovely faces,
And slender shapes as stately as thine own,
And lustrous eyes, whose manifold mute graces
Entranced the worshippers they shone upon.

And there was one whose neck did rise as whitely
From its thin screen as thine among its leaves ;
Her silken ringlets kissed its arch as lightly
As round thy brow the wind its wooing weaves.

Flowers of all hues around were breathing, blushing,
All gracious odors filled the floating air,
But naught could rival the tumultuous flushing
That lit her cheek impearled beneath her hair.

Because that high-born and pure-hearted maiden
Thenceforth would grace her maiden home no more ;
So drooped the silken fringes, heavy laden,
Of her blue eyes, like sapphires bright before.

She was my father's first and fairest daughter,
Whose gentle hand bestowed as true a heart.
With what sweet pride his kindling glances sought her,
Thus with her lover standing there apart.

The priest said "Ye are one," and with a blessing
Warm on his heart and lips, the father pressed
Through the close throng, but might not stay caressing
The dear form folded to his throbbing breast.

For up came then each little timid sister,
Doing shy homage to her bridal grace ;
And as they stood on tip of toe and kissed her,
They thought she had a wondrous lovely face.

Whether it was the veil's voluptuous trailing,
Or the soft pearls bewildering their young eyes,
Or that the tint upon her cheek was paling
Like the last roseate vespering in the skies,

I know not—but they turned away as mutely
From her white form as it had been a shrine,
And as her voice fell fairy-like and flutely,
Full many thought her beauty half divine.

I see it all as through a lengthened vista,
The cloud-like drapery, the gem-like eyes,
The bridal group around my peerless sister
Graceful uprising as white lilies rise.

But years have flown since that auspicious wedding,
Since those triumphant robes were laid aside,
And Time from his swift pinions has been shedding
His blight and blessing on the fair young bride.

They tell me she hath lost the starry beaming
That, in her girlhood kindled in her eyes,
But that she looketh like a spirit dreaming,
A-weary from her heaven-wrought ecstasies.

They say she is a calm and chastened creature
As ever knelt in prayer at dewy even,
A Christ-like patience touching every feature
Into a soft similitude of heaven.

Then by these signs I fear she may be taken
Before I see her gentle face again,
That we shall never meet till both awaken
Where souls are purified from sin and pain.

He from whose lips first fell the bridal blessing
Has gone before her to their native skies,
In the Redeemer's love sweet rest possessing,
Sunned in the calm effulgence of His eyes.

Who next shall go, I often muse and ponder,
Whose head lie low beneath the willow tree,
Whose ransomed spirit wake to bliss and wonder
By the green margent of the crystal sea.

There our full vestures, Lily! shall be whiter
Than gleams the silver of thy burnished cup,
Our radiant brows with God's impress be brighter,
And with a loftier grace be lifted up.

Till then, White Lily! be to me an earnest
Of those resplendent robes to angels given,
And ever, as thou fadest and returnest,
Remind me of my holy home in heaven.



THE ENCAMPING ANGEL.

My Guardian Angel! while the night is weeping,
And while alone, defenceless, I am sleeping,
Art thou thy vigil by my pillow keeping?

Hast thou, with self-forgetfulness, forsaken
Thy place beside the Throne, and kindly taken
Thy post by my lone couch till I awaken?

Is it thy presence holy that dispenses
These pure aspirings, these calm influences?
Are they of thy descension evidences?

While thus communion I with thee am holding,
I almost see thy brow's celestial molding,
And the white wings thy lineaments enfolding.

What are thy thoughts while I am stilly dreaming?
What radiant visions on thy soul are streaming,
Brighter by far than Day's meridian beaming?

Within thy ken are kindred angels winging
Their earthward flight, bland benedictions bringing?
Or by young children's cradles are they singing?

Do they o'ercome all sorrowful, rude noises,
With the majestic mildness of their voices,
Till Earth refrains from weeping, and rejoices?

Above the sufferer's pillow are they bending,
Rich consolation with his anguish blending,
Till Christ shall give the signal for ascending?

Will some remain to soothe the broken-hearted,
(As He, when human, with divinest art, did,)
And guard the sacred dust of the departed?

Where contrite souls are God's just anger dreading,
Are they compassionately, kindly treading,
O'er crimson sins the Savior's pardon shedding?

Are they unfolding to enfranchised mortals
The blissful gates, the fair and pearly portals,
Responsive to the hymns of the Immortals?

Benignest Angel! move the moments slowly?
Dost thou not thrill to join their worship holy
Rather than watch beside my slumber lowly?

No, Bright One! purified from self-denial,
It is to thee no banishment nor trial
Thus, o'er my sleep, to hold serene espial.

Christ Jesus charge concerning me hath given
To keep me in my rest, this summer even,
Where Christ commands thy post, there is thy heaven.

O, when the morn shall see thee swift returning
To those fair realms where seraphim are burning,
New ecstacies of love forever learning,

Beseech Him in each unforeseen mutation
That thou may'st come with gentle ministration
To me, who am an heir of His salvation.

And oh! when I shall feel that I am dying,
When to loved lips my own refuse replying,
Through the dim darkness let me see thee flying,

Mild, mighty Angel! from the surging river,
From mustering foes my fainting soul deliver,
Then bear it saved and safe to God the Giver.

WREATH AND HARP.

Being the device of a book-mark a fair young sister sent me.

I oped the welcome missive,
 And there fell upon the ground
A Wreath without a fragrance
 And a Harp without a sound.

Mute emblems full of meaning,
 What did ye teach to me?
What lesson did I gather
 From your voiceless harmony?

Dreamed I of festal chambers
 Decked with fairy flowers and light,
And troops of dancing maidens
 In their robes of lily white?

I dreamed of divers chambers,
 But they were not large nor light,
Nor were the dwellers merry,
 Though all arrayed in white.

Pale were their quiet faces,
Cold was the marble brow,
Ye might not find the traces
Of laughter on them now.

Thus memory brought them to me
In sad and solemn guise,
But soon the sadness altered
To a soft and glad surprise.

Faith drew aside the curtain
That veiled their souls from sight,
And lo! they walked in heaven,
Robed in celestial white.

Each head, divinely molded,
Wore an amaranthine crown ;
Their hair, in shivered splendor
Low to their feet fell down.

To golden harps they warbled
Round a "glorious high Throne,"
Discoursing wondrous music,
Such as angels love to own.

It was a lovely grouping,
It was a holy band ;
There were little fair-haired children
With their mothers by the hand.

There were youths of lofty stature,
With angelic port and brow,
Looking less on sainted maidens
Than on the Savior, now.

There were heads which once were hoary
In their pilgrimage below,
But now the crowns of glory
Shed gold upon the snow.

One face smiled often on me
As I watched it in the skies,
I thought it was my father,
But the tears stood in my eyes.

On starry plain and mountain
Walked the shining, happy throng,
And from each crystal fountain
Swept the sound of harp and song.

And Chief among ten thousand,
 Fairer than all beside,
 Broke on my soul the vision
 Of Jesus glorified.

Thus I lost myself in musing,
 With the token in my hand,
 Thus came sweet revelations
 Of the bright and better land.

O Harp ! O Garland verdant !
 By a sister were ye given ;
 But let our Christ invest me
 With the harp and crown in heaven !



IN PRIMO.

Close to my shielding side
 Nestle thee down and hide,
 Safe from the bleak, cold world so pitiless.

Soft, silent, harmless thing!
Shrewd nature cannot bring
A surer type of next to nothingness.
Thou canst not *choose* but breathe,
Thou canst not *choose* but wink,
But hast not wit to sheathe
Thy spreading palms of pink,
And minim fingers from the biting cold,
Nor round thy form thy fleecy robes to fold.
Thou canst not sit nor walk,
Thou canst not think nor talk,
Thou canst not bend a fern,
Thou canst not even turn
When thou art tired, to ease thy tender sides,
Such scanty force or will in thee abides.
Thou art so weak and wee,
So helpless utterly,
That, did I wish to put thee from my way,
There were no need to kill,
Merely to leave thee still,
And thy fine pulses soon would stint their play,
Thy tiny-ticking heart would cease to go,
Thy whisper-breath of life would cease to blow,
Its little rosy tide forget to flow.

Yet, though so void of strength,
So scant of breadth and length,
So microscopic in thy motive powers,
I read thy formless face
Like some sweet page of grace,
Unfolding heaven as do the stainless flowers.
For thou dost still condense,
O thou fair Impotence !
More wealth and worth than all the world contains,
In thy fine fibres and soft coursing veins.
Thou art a Golden Bowl
Shrining a human Soul
Capacious of delight no tongue can tell,
Capacious of unfathomed wo as well.
Thou art a Silver String,
Whose future vibrating
Shall thrill its pæans to the listening spheres
Or moan its minors through unending years.
Thou art a Pitcher, full
Of water wonderful,
Whose lucid depths shall glass an angel's face,
Or flow in briny floods through wailing space.

Thou art a Cistern Wheel,
Whose swift revolve shall feel
The impulse of the creant Hand divine
When other orbs shall cease to roll and shine.
How shall I liken thee,
Thou small Humanity,
Significant beyond thy visible marge?
Thou art most like a star,
So present, yet so far,
So seeming small, yet sphering life so large.
Spark of Divinity!
Heir of Eternity!
Great things were done for thee
Back in Antiquity.
Things which the angels try
To pierce into and pry,
While some flew singing from the jasper wall
“Glory to One, good will and peace to all!”
That Just One was, for thee,
Emptied of Deity,
And born a naked child in fleshly thrall.
He walked through sorrow’s flood,
He oozed great drops of blood
From that divine, dear brow, with Godhead crowned.

All night, for thee and me,
His spirit's agony
Distilled its crimson on the grieving ground.
There came an angel bright,
From the far spheres of light,
To lend Him strength in that mysterious hour.
O measureless, awful wo,
That made Him stoop so low
Created strength to need, Lord of all might and power !
He suffered shame and loss,
And on the cruel cross
Broke His great heart of love in twain, and died.
Then, at the spear's rude throw,
In rosy-lucent flow,
Forth sluiced the mingled flood from His warm side.
Breathe soft, my little child !
They laid the Undefined
In a dark tomb, where lie the lowly dead.
And angels watched alone,
Calm shrined in that cold stone,
Fast at His sacred feet and by His holy head.
Breathe free, my trembling dove !
The Lord of life and love
Not long was prisoned in those granite bars.

He burst the rigid tomb,
He rose in dewy bloom
Fresher than youth, more splendid than the stars.
One brief, sweet instant, then,
He gave to Earth again,
Then soared above the slope of straining eyes.
And now, for thee and me,
And others, verily,
He decketh many mansions in the skies.
Who, then, dare look in scorn
On thy frail form forlorn,
On the dumb pleading of thy innocent face,
When this ascended Lord,
By seraphim adored,
Once held and blessed a child in His embrace?
Save thy sweet helplessness!
I fly to ease the stress
Of my heart's throbs, at sound of thy low wail.
I clasp thee in caress,
Thou holy Harmlessness!
And watch beside thee till the night grows pale.

CRADLE SONG.

“ Sweet and low, sweet and low,
 Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
 Wind of the western sea !
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
 Blow him again to me,
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

“ Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
 Father will come to thee soon ;
Rest, rest, on mother’s breast,
 Father will come to thee soon ;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
 Under the silver moon ;
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.”

TENNYSON.

Soft and bright, soft and bright,
 Droop on her golden head,
Bright, bright, pale moonlight!
 Droop on her golden head.
Glide with a tender glory down,
And crown her with a lily crown,
 Soft silvering the bed
Where my little one, where my pretty one, sleeps. *

Violets blue, violets blue,
 Pant your precious perfume out,
Blue, blue, bathed in dew,
 Pant your precious perfume out.
Breathe a blessing on the breeze
Scented sweet as linden trees,
 Or her lip's sweeter pout;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Bonnie bird, bonnie bird,
 Warbling all the live-long night,
Bird, bird, ever heard
 Warbling all the live-long night!
Come and carol, glad and free,
A soft enchanting melody,
 And charm my baby bright,
While the little one, while the happy one, sleeps.

All things fair, all things fair,
 Lend your lovely influence,
 Fair, fair, rich and rare,
 Lend your lovely influence !
 Odor, song, and mild moonbeam,
 Blend in a blissful, baby-dream,
 And soothe each baby sense,
 While my bonnie one, while my blessed one, sleeps !



SILVER PICTURES.

“ Apples of gold in Pictures of silver.”

I.

Wave of my life, soft heaving on my breast !
 A mere mimosa, shrinking into rest.

My blossomed Hope ;—a downy, dimpled grace,
 With speechless smiles slow circling o'er her face,
 And faint sweet breathing, such as violets lay
 On the wide worship of a morn in May.

Vague, airy grasps
Of little, aimless hands,
With dainty, tendril-clasps,
Binding my heart like bands.
Hair, pluming down
Like a bird's breasted brown,
Sheened to the satin stroking of a mother's palm ;—
Eyes slowly orbiting in an innocent calm,
Or winking and blinking like two little stars.
Wee, wistful mouth, with marvelous Ohs and Ahs,
A rosy Bliss
Swift opening to the 'sesame' of a kiss.
Nose without form, but most complete
In comeliness ;—moist, muffled feet
With curling tips of toes,
Touchy as balsams, pinker than a rose,
From which, round nails are born,
Sleek as the sheathing of a grain of corn.
My Self's Epitome,
Fashioned most cunningly,
Contented but to be !

Plunged, downy-deep,
In silken-smothered sleep,
'Neath hushing hands and very velvet tones ;
Or loosed, mid murmurous moans

From flaxen trammels and from fleecy folds,
 To gradual nudeness dotted with little colds ;
 Quivering with vague alarms,
 Shown in branched fingers and wide-shuddering arms ;
 Drenched, like a rain-shut flower
 In the warm, shimmering shower
 Of Love's sweet, daily baptism,—
 That outward, visible sign of baby grace
 Unfolding in the freshened form and face,
 And eyes, whose dewy deeps
 Subsiding in slow sleeps,
 Blend colors like a prism.

II.

My Golden Apple, set in silver fair,
 Six months have shed their lustre on her hair!

 What see I now? A lovely, lucent tooth,
 Pearled in the coral bed of her sweet mouth,
 Richer than all the treasures of the South!
 Then I see such pretty things!
 I see fluttering arms, like wings,
 Keeping time to airy springs.
 Crystal crowings treble after,
 In a pearly-pebbled laughter,

Breaking all the air around
Into tinkled rills of sound.
I see eyes, whose spirit-flashes
Soften out from silken lashes,
Cheek whose polish answers well
To the sheen upon a shell,
Sliding back to where an ear,
Curled in a smile, looks pleased to hear ;
And my humming kisses dip
In the roseate of a lip.
O that burnished, only tooth !
O that pouting, pretty mouth,
Dropping dews, by which I know.
Other pearls lie hid below !
(There's a ring around the wrist,—
'Tis a fairy boon I wist.)
Sometimes are her features wrought,
As if a fledgeling of a thought
Slowly skimmed across her soul,
Holding it in brief control.
Last, I see her winsome face
Through a veil of ancient lace
Thrown, in merry masquerade,
O'er my bonny, baby maid.

III.

Apple of Gold, set fair in silver sheen !
More liberal on me does thine aspect lean.

Browner are the sloping eyes
Where the light in shadow lies ;
Farther down her shoulders fair,
Strays the sunshine of her hair,
And her smiles are set in pearls
Barely brighter than her curls.
Now, her little orb of life,
With a lovely promise rife,
Doth a golden era reach
In her first essays at speech,
In her first essays to walk ;—
Baby totterings ! baby talk !
Stirring in a mother's breast,
Deeps no poet hath expressed.

IV.

My Golden Fruit, in peerless argent set!
The picture deepens, and I see thee yet.

See I now a waxen baby folded to her blissful breast,
And her gracious, velvet palmings soothe its ever-waxen
rest.

And she rocketh, and she warbleth many a dulcet baby-
round,
Winding me and all the zephyrs in a sorcery of sound.

See I then a dimpled Paphia, bright emerging from her
bath,
And her shoulder, pearled with water, still a purer polish
hath.

Hair, wave-darkened, clings like sea-weed to her neck
and perfect head,
Carving clear a Grecian outline, where a glory was
instead.

See I next, a little figure lily-vestured for the night,
Standing for a thoughtful instant sculptured in the lunar
light.

Then she cometh, slowly smiling, my outstretching hand
to meet,
While I watch the drifted flaking of her white and naked
feet.

Then the dimpled hands are folded, and the shining head
is bowed,
And the baby prayer she utters soars aloft the silver
cloud.

Then an angel brings a blessing, sheds it softly on her
head,
And the dewy sleep of childhood drops its balm upon
her bed.

V.

My Golden Apple sheened in silver thrall!
My Fruit ambrosial loosening to the fall!

Tell I of the blessed Savior whom the shining angels
praise;
And she saith, "I want to see Him," and I ponder what
she says.

And one night to be remembered, when I laid her down
to rest,
With her leafy hands reposing on her sinless, baby breast,
Said I, softly, "Bless you, darling!"—and she answered,
very mild,
"Jesus Christ loves little children; Jesus blessed a baby
child."

O the silver chord was loosening, which made music in
my soul!
O the pitcher thrilled to breaking, and the vibrant golden
bowl!

After then, she altered star-like, pale and saintly like a
star
When it pallors to the dawning of the brighter Day afar.

And a glory sat pavilioned in the darkness of her eyes,—
I knew not she stood in shadow of the gates of Paradise.
Knew I not the angels called her from my shielding side
away,
Dreamed I not her sunny morning broadened to a brighter
day.

But the high decree in heaven true and tenderly was
read,
And the shaft, death-sped from Azrael, smote that fair
and shining head.

Smote my golden-gleaming Apple, softly sphered in
silver thrall,
Smote it till it shook and trembled to a fatal, final fall!

VI.

My Golden Apple! Apple of mine eye!
Through blinding tears I cannot see thee nigh.

O how heavy hangs the silence, heavy glooming like a
pall!
Lifted never by the echo of her song or silver call.

All the day is very dreary,—weary, dreary is the day
Since that little loving spirit floated up the shining way.
Passing fair it is and lovely, where she dwelleth all the
while,
O I saw the heavenly orient dawning in that holy smile!

And I strive to still this aching with a vision of the place;
But my heart is breaking, breaking, for the vision of her
face.

Though I printed countless kisses passionate on cheek
and brow,
Seem they very stunted blisses when I think upon them
now.

If I had again before me that unconscious marble form,
Oh! methinks my close caresses should to life the
sculpture warm.

Hush, and hearken, troubled spirit! for thy words are
wide and wild;
Let a gentler grief keep vigil by the slumber of my child.
Let thy vision pierce prophetic to the dawning life divine,
Which shall crown with larger lustre all her beauty
infantine.

Penetrate the Holy City with all precious jewels dight,
Gates of pearl and walls of jasper, amethyst and chrysolite.
Touch thy fancy with the tender tintings of the pastures
green,
Let the stilly waters sparkle to thee with an opal sheen;—

All in vain!—my stricken spirit, with her shadow
 backward cast,
Dwelleth on the heavenly Future less than on the buried
 Past.

Dwelleth less on gemmy splendors than on that sweet
 time of grace

When my blessed one was folded softly in my first
 embrace.

When more rich than gold of Ophir, I esteemed one
 sheeny curl,

When no gem shone half so precious as that peerless,
 primal pearl.

When no rare Italian warbling on my ear so sweetly fell,
As rang out her baby carol, chiming like a silver bell.

When my vision swept triumphant down the purple
 deeps of time,

And discerned this silver promise orbiting to a golden
 prime.

Dowered with a richer lustre than was ever sphered in
 me,

Nobler in a large fulfillment than I ever hope to be.

O my Jewel! O my Flower! O my Bird, my Beam,
my Star!

How shall I express your being,—what you were, or
what you are!

Now I sit alone and ponder on her form, her smile, her
glance,

Pining to take wings and wander to her fair inheritance.

Musing on the evanescence of my bliss too bright to last,
Till I think my life is ebbing in the tears that fall so fast.

Sometimes, through the mist, the sunlight mocks the
magic of her hair,

Or my swift ear feels the snow-fall of her foot upon the
stair.

Sometimes on my work the shadow of her dark eye slides
along,

Or the rushing of the zephyr wakes the warble of her
song.

Or the leafy touches haunt me of her small and dainty
palm,

Or ideal, pearl-lit kisses, thrill me with a sense of balm.

When the dim uncertain twilight dies away in dewy
gloom,
Shadowy garments seem to flutter in the corners of my
room.

And when lucid flakes of moonlight through the darkness
drift adown,
To my eye they take the fashion and the glory of a crown.

Thus my love compels my senses,—striving tenderly to
cast
O'er the sharpness of my Sorrow, the soft mantle of the
Past.

Or she turns the pallid Presence slowly from the past,
away,
Till it meets the broad effulgence of the distant, heavenly
day ;

Till, by gazing on the glory of the golden Evermore,
Waxeth to a wan reflection what was comfortless before.

Yet, for all the sweet revealings of the heaven above me
bent,
Seem I still to walk in sorrow as my fitting element.

And it never grows familiar—as at first, I thrill and wait
For that voice and form to brighten all this blankness
desolate.

As at first, in hall and nursery, in each void, accustomed
place,
Doth my fancy form the features of that little, spirit face.

Were it always conscious daylight, I might learn to bear
my cross ;
But deluding dreams at midnight win me from a sense
of loss,—

Drown this dull and dreary aching in a Lethe of relief,
Till the gradual, bitter waking, brings the memory and
the grief.

And I think the deepest darkness palls adown the early
dawn,
In my sleep to see her near me, then to wake and find
her gone!

O she was a summer sunshine, touching all my life to
light!
When God breathed her into being, He impressed her
very bright.

O she was a summer sunshine, crowning even Care with
light!

In my soul she made the noontide which her absence
maketh night.

Seemeth mine a slender sorrow to the careless eyes of
men;

Only God who gave her, knoweth what He hath resumed
again.

True, she was a childish creature, scarcely larger than
He gave,

Yet the long, long life before me lies in shadow of her
grave.

And this slow, relentless scripture tolls its cadence
constantly:—

*'Thou shalt go to her, but never, never shall she come to
thee.'*

O how heavy glooms the silence! gloometh heavy like a
pall,

While the dying zephyrs answer, "*vale, vale,*" to my
call!

VII.

Hesperian Apple, pictured argentine!
From heaven thine aspect leaneth more divine.

Yes! she has left me for those restful regions
Where the eternal gales of rapture blow;
And her companions are the shining legions
Walking in bliss we lack the power to know.

There, not in guerdon for her baby merit,
Nor through desert of lily innocence,
But through our Lord's dear love, she doth inherit
Things wide beyond the ken of mortal sense.

And still to earth her gentle eyes are turning,
And still on me her sainted smiles are bent,
For her First Love in faithful fondness yearning,
And watching if I tread the way she went.

And I, though still I wear my crown of sorrow,
And feel my way by faith and not by sight,
Walk not oblivious of that clear To-morrow
Which shall o'ercome this long-impending night.

With thoughts of Christ and my ascended angel,
 He, the "First-fruits," and she, His little child,
 I humbly hearken to the soft Evangel,
 Down floating from the heights where stars are piled.

It poiseth o'er me like a scraph's pinion,
 Wafting a transient heaven through my breast ;
 For whence it cometh, Grief hath no dominion,
 And aching Love is raptured into rest.

And still it whispereth the old, sweet story
 That nerved the saints and martyrs where they trod,
Eye hath not seen, nor heart conceived, the glory
 Sphering the blissful souls beloved of God.

 REQUIEM.

Lowly, shining head,
 Where we lay thee down
 With the lowly dead,
 Droop thy golden crown !

Meekly, marble palms,
 Fold across the breast,

Sculptured in white calms
Of unbreaking rest !

Softly, starry eyes,
Veil your darkened spheres,
Nevermore to rise
In summershine or tears !

Calmly, crescent lips,
Yield your dewy rose
To the wan eclipse
Of this pale repose !

Slumber, aural shells !
No more dying Even
Through your spiral cells
Weaveth gales of heaven.

Stilly, slender feet,
Rest from rosy rhyme,
With the ringing sweet
Of her silver chime !

Holy smile of God,
Spread thy glory mild
Underneath the sod
On this little child !

"I HEARD A VOICE FROM HEAVEN."

Hark! from the margin of the crystal sea,
A shining seraph clearly calleth me
With most effectual calling. From the verge
She spieth me slow wading through the surge
Of my deep sorrow; and she sendeth down
Such gracious glimpses of a golden crown,
Such smiling gleams of bliss prepared for us,
As make my life's deep midnight luminous.
And these sweet gleams and smiles like stars are set,
To soothe the darkness where I wander yet;—
They let heaven through upon me, and I go
In their clear radiance, praying as I go,
And nothing doubting that, when I shall close
My willing eyes in their serene repose,
That seraph shape will guide me to the bliss
Wrought, in those regions, from the woes of this.

GLORY ON THE GRAVE.

Soft streameth down the moonlight

On cliff, and glen, and wave,

Descending ever softest

On a little grassy grave.

With tenderest effulgence a tide of pallid gold

Down issues, brightly bathing the marble and the mould,

Where my darling lieth lowly,

In a rest serene and holy,

Brow and baby-bosom pulseless, and her innocent white
hands

Making no more gentle gesture,

Fair folded in her vesture,

As pale and pure a presence as any statue stands.

O! where she lowly lieth,

My stricken spirit trieth

To await the sweet unfolding of this bitter providence;

And now the moon-beam hoary,

With expressive grace and glory,

Mutely pausing on her marble, to my soul appealeth
thence.

It resteth on the sculptured stone
A messenger from the Great White Throne :
It keepeth watch by her gentle side
As the angels watched when our Lord had died :
It sitteth still on her little feet
Like a brooding memory, pale and sweet :
It lieth along with a pearly light,
Like her spirit's mantle, dropped in flight :
It falleth with silver splendor down,
Like a halo shed from her saintly crown :
It beameth benignly all over the sod,
A smile and a blessing straight from God.

O ! streameth soft the moonlight,
Where my blessed one low lies,
Like a glorified white angel,
Far leaning from the skies.
Only the moonlight paleth,
Waxeth feebler and then faileth,
And, to cumbered mortal vision, leaveth dark the grave,
and lone,
While the angel watebeth ever,
His vigil faileth never,

For a charge to him is given, concerning that white stone;
 And with Faith's uncumbered vision,
 I may see his shape elysian
 By that consecrated stone,
 Watching ever,
 Failing never,
 By that lowly, holy stone.



RESURGAM.

"Thy dead men shall live;
 Together with my dead body shall they arise.
 Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust!"

ISAIAH, xxvi. 19.

When the world's weary cares and collisions
 Are sunk in the river of rest,
 Then come, in bewildering visions,
 The beautiful forms of the blest.
 Their foreheads have lost all the traces
 That told of the passions of earth,
 And the light that illumines their faces,
 Is fresh from their heavenly birth.

Their smiles tell of perfect exemption

From sorrow, from sin, and from pain ;
They sing the New Song of Redemption,—

“ All worthy the Lamb that was slain !”

And oh ! when I see them returning

So graced, to their home in the sky,
It seems to my purified yearning,
An excellent blessing to die.

To die and be laid with the number

Whose voices are nevermore heard ;—
No tumult invades their deep slumber,
Nor the breeze nor the song of the bird.

It seems to me dark, but not dreary,

That mansion beneath the green sod,
I shall fold my pale hands, and world-weary,
Commend my calm spirit to God.

Oh ! who can explain the returnings

Of hope to the desolate heart,
The pinings and passionate yearnings
As the loved and the lovely depart,
The desires for a nobler existence

Than earth ever promised or gave,
The dread of the shadowy distance
That stretches beyond, from the grave,—

The vague and unsatisfied craving
 For bliss unimagined before,
The thirst for renown, and the slaving
 To clamber one pinnacle more,—
The genius forever in motion,
 Repelling and scorning control,
The slumberless waves of emotion,
 Refreshing or blighting the soul,—
If a life more divine and enduring
 Shall not the freed spirit surprise,
And a paradise worthy securing,
 Allure to repose in the skies ?
Alas, if the marble detaineth
 The *soul* in its silent abode,
And a rest no more welcome, remaineth
 To comfort the people of God !
For the world with its pomps and its pleasures,
 Shall pass, like a pageant, away ;
The moth is consuming our treasures,
 Our heart-blossoms droop and decay.
Our joy comes in fitful, brief flashes,
 Our grief-shadows lengthen life-long,
Our fruit turns to wormwood and ashes,
 And sinks into wailing, our song.

We gaze on a face fixed and solemn,
All helpless to soothe or to save,
Then we cling to a passionless column
And wish that it sentried our grave.
For oh! in that utter prostration,
When Faith folds her faltering wing,
The crushed heart repels consolation,
As if there were no such sweet thing.

BUT—the parting from earth is the union
With all that makes heaven above;
To die is to hold rich communion
With God and the angels of love.
From the world, that pale form and undreaming,
Has vanished forever and aye,
But its spirit is with his Redeemer,
Calm sunned in His radiant eye.

He sees, in the broad light of heaven,
All explained that was mystic before;
How that not a pang less could be given,
Nor even one ecstasy more.

That the sharp-piercing thorns which were braiding
 On earth, for his temples of care,
Are changed into garlands unfading,
 Beseeming a seraph to wear.

He sees where the hand of his Savior
 Has graciously guided him through,
And how often his sinful behavior
 Has wounded and grieved Him anew.
He gazes—and, trembling, adoring,
 He casts himself down by the Throne,
And in melody high and outpouring,
 Tells ever what Jesus has done.

'Tis a boon then, oh! 'tis not a blighting,
 This *Death* which attends on our race;
'Tis a bright but veiled angel, inviting
 The soul to the Savior's embrace.
'Tis all that we mean when we languish
 From sin's servitude to be free,
'Tis what we implore, when our anguish
 Bends the spirit alike and the knee.

'Tis to join the beloved Immortals
 Who passed from our sight long ago,
Through the pearly, bliss-opening portals,
 Which, to us, were the flood-gates of woe.
'Tis to fold in our thrilling embraces,
 The forms we have mused on for years,
And to gaze with rapt smiles, on the faces
 Our grief once embalmed with our tears.

'Tis to glow with a beauty resplendent,
 Divinity starred in our eyes,—
'Tis to reign, with Dominions attendant,
 High throned in the bliss of the skies ;
'Tis to burn with a love past expression
 On heights the winged seraph ne'er trod,
'Tis to rise in eternal progression,
 Expanding in likeness to God.

Then praise to Thee, Spirit indwelling !
 High praise for our earliest breath !
And praise for Thy gift all excelling,—
 The Life that is found but in Death.

O! we ask not for length of existence
 In this world which is not our home;
We spring to that Life in the distance,
 We thrill for Thy Kingdom to come!



STELLA.

My head, the other night, my pillow prest,
In a clear quietude of waking rest,
And I might see, my open casement through,
White flakes of moonlight drifting from the blue.

They slid with silver slope adown a roof
Whose angle cut the sky a space aloof,—
A homely tenement of wood and paint,
But crowned with glory now, like any saint.

And as I marked the shade and shimmer lie
In pitying pauses on its poverty,
A little star peeped up above the edge,
As might a blossom from an alpine ledge.

I watched it as it smiled and stepped apace,
Up through the orient with serenest grace ;
And when it went behind my curtain's shield,
I knew it traversed still, the azure field.

Then thought I of my sinless seraph-child,
Whose little life dawned on me undefiled,
Making my earth irradiant with heaven,
What stinted space to me its light was given.

And when her guileless spirit from me went
Behind Life's curtain, up the firmament,
Did I not know it shined as fair a sphere
As when it held my bliss and being here ?

And from the orbit where she moves and sings,
Streams there not light, with healing in its wings,
Attracting me, as sunbeams draw the dew,
To follow her with steadfast step and true ?

Then shall I weep and wail, because I miss
From my sweet Pleiades, the twinkling bliss ?
No—through my tears, I smile on what you are,
High fixed in heaven, my pure and peerless Star !

DEUS MISEREATUR.

When my Pleiad paled and vanished

Up the firmament afar,

Seemed it to my bliuded gazing

Heaven contained no other star.

Seemed it that the tiny twinkle

Of my feeble Lesser Light,

Had no skill to sheen the darkness

Of the drooping, utter night.

I felt desolate in sorrow,

In my sorrow drear and wild ;

To myself I seemèd the only

Mother who had lost a child.

Saw I not the heaving Rama

Stretching round me everywhere ;

Heard I not the grieving Rachels

Pour their wailing on the air,

Till a wilder *miserere*

With a sharper-thrilling wail

Stabbed the air with such an anguish

That a listening world grew pale.

Then I stripped away the sack-cloth
And the ashes from my head,
Haply to discern this woe
Refusing to be comforted.
And behold ! the ruthless Archer
Bent four times his fatal bow,
And with each unblenching arrow,
Was a 'shining mark' laid low.

O the undreamt, awful power
Of the human heart for grief !
O the strength that bows to breaking,
Yet no breaking brings relief !

Proudly used that fond Cornelia
To array her treasured pearls ;
Three she counted for her Gracchi
Flashing by five gentle girls.

Rang their mirth in grove and garden,
Flew their feet through bower and hall,
Their bright presence made the homestead
One long scene of festival.

When they walked the crowded city
 They made sunshine everywhere,
From the palaeae, from the hovel,
 Blessings followed them like air.
Some were small and some were stately,
 Each was fair and all were good,
One—she seemed the guardian angel
 Of the shining sisterhood.

Loved and lovely, glad and gracious,
 Four unsullied, happy pairs,
Clothed upon with youth and beauty
 Walked they ‘angels unawares.’

Even as saith the holy Scripture
 Of the women in the field,—
Four were left, and four were taken,
 With the mystic symbol sealed.*

· How they went, I may not utter,
 What sharp way their footsteps trod,
How the fiery chariot bore them
 Smiling martyrs back to God.

* Revelations, iii. 12.

But I know what weight of anguish
 Bowed that mother's heart and knee ;
Needed *she* a 'strengthening angel.'
 In her grief's Gethsemane !

Well I know the *de profundis*
 Of her smitten spirit's moan
When she cast her crown of sorrow
 Down before the veiled Throne.
Veiled in clouds, thick-robed in thunder,
 Seemingly for judgment set ;
Might she not discern the mercy
 Throbbing past the curtain yet.
But it floated through the darkness
 With sustaining, sweet control,
Till a mild, majestic patience
 Shed its moonlight in her soul.

Now she walketh calm and saintly
 On the heights by martyrs trod
When they see, through heaven opened,
 Jesus by the throne of God.

O thou Love, white-crowned and queenly,
 Rising regnant over Death!
 Dawns for thee a bright Hereafter,
 Where no sorrow shadoweth;—
 Where the heavenly *jubilates*
 Thrilling down with golden fall,
 Shall o'ercome the vain *venites*
 Of thy vibrant human call.

 THOUGHTS FROM VISIONS.

“In thoughts from the visions of the night,
 When deep sleep falleth on men;—”

JOB, iv. 13.

Thou holdest mine eyes waking, solemn night!
 With all thy soft, sidereal fires a-light;—
 Let bird and zephyr sleep, and folded flower,
 I will keep watch with thee, this gracious hour.

What wondrous beauty shall my form put on,
To match the shining shapes around the Throne?
What regal impress stamp my brow the while,
A child of God, and walking in His smile?

What glorious garniture of crown and palm,
What angel-minstrelsy of harp and psalm,
What sphered inheritance of fair domain,
Shall make me peer in that resplendent train?

By what bright symbol shall I know that face
First lost, first thrilling to my swift embrace?
By what sustaining strength, what mastering power
Shall I endure the rapture of that hour?

In what large language shall I clothe the throng
Of trembling ecstasies too fine for song?
What lyric utterance, silver as the spheres,
Shall voice the impassioned eloquence of tears?

In this hushed hour of rapture and repose,
Such full, free effluence my spirit knows!
And shadows of great thoughts sweep slow along,
Dim yearning to be sculptured into song.

All dumbly striving, and with throes intense,
To carve in living words their vehemence,
And stand ealm statues with a glory on,
Immortal in the Poet-Pantheon.

Then, with her robe of grief around her cast,
My soul goes back, a pilgrim to the Past,
With prayerful pauses at each silent shrine,
Where rest the hopes that made those days divine.

The rainbow visions of my sunny youth
Hang sorrowshaded in the halls of Truth,
Like antique portraitures of heads sublime,
Touched tender with the tawny tint of time.

And the great Grief of my maturer years
Stands draped majestic, too rapt for tears.
How lies its shadow lengthened on the road
That leads me to the light of heaven and God !

And, grandly orbiting on my silent soul,
Looms the consummate hour of earth's control,
Then slow subsides in that enduring day,
Which lifts all darkness from my soul away.

Death, Death, divinest Death ! thou meanest Life.
 Thou art the avenue to peace from strife.
 And oh, Dominions, Virtues, seraph-Fires !
 What is the *Life* to which my Soul aspires ?

Night dies in day ;—from height on height afar,
 Voice throbs through space, soft falling like a star,
 Responsive from the golden thrones above,
 Love, Love, Love,—Love is Life and Life is Love.



CYNTHIA.

O thou serene similitude of one departed,
 Graceful of presence and with stainless brow,
 The lovely, the beloved, the happy-hearted,
 With what mute meaning dost thou meet me now !

Thy half-veiled eyes reveal a dewy brightness,
 Thy rose-lips barely breathe a balmy smile,
 Thy sculptured arms and hands of Parian whiteness,
 Soft dimple down thy flowing robe the while.

Thy tranquil aspect leaneth to me laden
With memories pleasant as the smells of flowers.
I seem to see thee still, a mirthful maiden,
Rosy as morn and radiant as the Hours.

Like pictures graven in a lovely story,—
Once by the wayside doth thy shadow fall,
Once, mnsing in the moonlight's silver glory,
Then garlanded for some bright festival.

Another time the golden sun was slanting
Warm through the windows of the House of Prayer,
The organ swelled, the choristers were chanting,
And praise, like incense, floated up the air.

And as a due devotion held thee kneeling
For a brief moment ere the morning psalm,
The heavenly radiance athwart thee stealing,
Subdued thy features to a tender calm.

And after then, a bride before the altar,
Then with a mother's crown set on thy head,
And then,—alas! well may my fancy falter
To picture thee reposing with the dead.

'Tis well I did not see thee lying stilly,
Thy marble hands cold crossing on thy breast,
Thy silent presence, pallid as a lily,
And shrouded for the long, undreaming rest.

For thy remembrance dwelleth with me brightly,
As when in days far flown I pressed thy hand,
And yet thou walkest with the angels whitely,
In the green gardens of the Better Land.

END.

